

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Currently Amended): A server for managing the retail sales of a product across a communication network comprising:

retail sales state management means for managing the retail sales state of said product;

price setting means for dynamically setting the price of said product in accordance with rules and the retail sales state of said product and in accordance with the actual retail sales status of said product when managed by said retail sales state management means; and

product information provision means for, upon the receipt of an information request regarding said product from a user via said communication network, furnishing a ~~request transmission source~~ the user with the information concerning said product and said price of said product, set by said price setting means at the time said information request is received.

2. (Original): The server according to claim 1, further comprising:

price trend information provision means for generating, in accordance with said actual retail sales state of said product, information concerning trends affecting the changes of said price of said product, and for furnishing said information to said information request transmission source.

3. (Original): The server according to claim 1, wherein said price setting means can set a price for said product by using rules, based on said retail sales state of said product, according to which the price is increased as the number of product units sold rises or decreased as the number of product units sold falls.

4. (Cancelled):

5. (Currently Amended): A server for charging for and providing digital content via a communication network comprising:

sales state management means, for managing the sales state of said digital content;

price setting means, for dynamically changing a charge for accessing said digital content in accordance with rules and the sales state of said digital content and in accordance with said sales state of said digital content, which is managed by said sales state management means; and

information provision means for presenting to an information request transmission source, upon the receipt of an information request regarding said digital content from a user via said communication network, furnishing the user with the information concerning said digital content and said charge for accessing said digital content that is set by said price setting means at the time said information request is received.

6. (Original): The server according to claim 5, further comprising:

price trend information provision means, for generating, in accordance with said sales state of said digital content, information concerning trends affecting the changing of said charge for accessing said digital content and for furnishing said information to said information request transmission source.

7. (Original): The server according to claim 5, wherein said price setting means sets said charge for accessing said digital content in accordance with rules and said sales state of said digital content and according to which said charge for an access is increased when the number of accesses of said digital content rises or is reduced when the number of accesses falls.

8. (Original): The server according to claim 5, wherein said price setting means sets said charge for accessing said digital content in accordance with rules, which is based on said sales state of said digital content, according to which said charge for an access is increased when the rank awarded said digital content, which is consonant with the popularity or the evaluation of said digital content, is incremented, or said charge for an access is reduced when said rank awarded said digital content is decremented..

9. (Cancelled).

10. (Currently Amended): An information communication terminal, for accessing a product retail sales management server across a communication network and for purchasing a product offered by said server, comprising:

a graphical-user interface,

for receiving an information request regarding a product from a user,

for sending said information request to said server,

for displaying information concerning said product, a dynamically-set price of said product, and trends affecting the changes of said dynamically-set price, whereby said information is received from the server,

for accepting a purchase request of said product from said user after said user has been provided said information, and

for transmitting said purchase request to said server.

~~whereby an information request is issued to said server in order to obtain information concerning said product and the price of said product;~~

~~whereby said information concerning said product and said price of said product, and information concerning trends affecting the changes of said price are received after said server has accepted said information request; and~~

~~whereby, when a user has examined said information, as needed, and has determined to purchase said product, a purchase request to that effect is transmitted to said server.~~

11. (Currently Amended): A product retail sales management method, for managing the retail sales of a product in accordance with a purchase request that is issued, via a communication network, by a server connected thereto, comprising the steps of:

receiving an information request from a user regarding a product;

managing the retail sales state of said product;

dynamically setting the price of said product in accordance with rules and the retail sales state of said product and in accordance with the actual retail sales status of said product;

furnishing information to said user concerning said product upon the receipt of an said information request via said communication network, and furnishing said price set for said product at the time said information request is accepted; and

accepting a purchase request from said user for said product that is issued after said information concerning said product and said price of said product have been provided.

12. (Original): The product retail sales management method according to claim 11, further comprising the steps of:

generating, upon receipt of said information request, information concerning trends affecting the changes of said price of said product in accordance with said retail sales state of said product,

wherein, at said step of furnishing said information concerning said product and said price of said product, said information concerning said trends affecting the changes of said price of said product is also furnished.

13. (Currently Amended): A product retail sales management method, for managing the retail sales of a product in accordance with a purchase request that is issued, via a communication network, by a server connected thereto, comprising the steps of:

receiving an information request from a user regarding a product;

managing the retail sales state of said product;

dynamically setting the price of said product in accordance with rules and the retail sales state of said product and in accordance with the actual retail sales status of said product; and

furnishing to said user information concerning said product upon the receipt of an information request via said communication network, and furnishing to said user said price set for said product at the time said information request is accepted.

14. (Currently Amended): A storage medium on which input means of a computer stores a computer-readable program that permits said computer to perform:

a process for managing the retail sales state of said product;

a process for dynamically setting the price of said product in accordance with rules and the retail sales state of said product and in accordance with the actual retail sales status of said product;

a process for furnishing to a user information concerning said product upon the receipt of an information request regarding said product from said user via said communication network, and furnishing to said user said price set for said product at the time said information request is accepted; and

a process for accepting a purchase request from said user for said product that is issued after said information concerning said product and said price of said product have been provided.

15. (Original): The storage medium according to claim 14, wherein said program generates, upon receipt of said information request, information concerning trends affecting the changes of said price of said product in accordance with said retail sales state of said product; and

wherein, in said process for furnishing said information concerning said product and said price of said product, said program furnishes said information concerning said trends affecting the changes of said price of said product.

16. (Currently Amended): A program transmission apparatus comprising:
storage means for storing a program that permits a computer to perform a process for managing the retail sales state of said product,

a process for dynamically setting the price of said product in accordance with rules and the retail sales state of said product and in accordance with the actual retail sales status of said product,

a process for furnishing to a user information concerning said product upon the receipt of an information request for said product from said user via said communication network, and furnishing to said user said price set for said product at the time said information request is accepted, and

a process for accepting a purchase request from said for said product that is issued after said information concerning said product and said price of said product have been provided; and

transmission means for reading said program from said storage means and for transmitting said program.

17. (New): A system, comprising:

a retail sales component for maintaining retail sales data regarding a product, the retail sales data including previous retail sales data of the product and current retail sales data of the product;

a price setting component for dynamically setting a price of the product in accordance with price-setting rules associated with trends in the retail sales data, wherein the price of the product is within a predetermined price range; and

an information provision component,

for receiving an information request about a product from a user,

in response to the information request, for furnishing the user with information regarding the product and the price set by the price setting component, and

for receiving a purchase request for the product from the user after the user has received the information.

18. (New): The system of claim 17, further comprising:

a user terminal for providing a graphical user interface to the user for inputting the information request, for displaying the information, and for inputting the purchase request, wherein the user terminal is operatively connected to the information provision component.

19. (New): A method, comprising:

receiving an information request regarding a product from a user;

maintaining current and historical retail sales data regarding the product;

dynamically determining a price of the product based on trends in the current and historical retail sales data, wherein the price is set within a predetermined price range; and

in response to the information request, furnishing to the user information regarding the product and the dynamically-set price of the product.